

Books and the People Who Make Them

One Who Counts

By GEORGE GORDON.

CROWNED by the French Academy! and yet, such is the scope of your nihilism, you no longer count, Monsieur Boylesve.

Now when the fields that in the old days offered daisies are scarred with shell craters and the furrows turned by the graceful plough are torn with dynamite; now when the strongest men are maimed irreparably and the loveliest women put off their pleasant red and gold to don the black of mourning; when beauty seems as rare as sleep without dreams and in the mud of France the poppies, vagrants of the hedgerow, take on an added loveliness because so unexpected; now when, if ever, smiles are precious and the kiss of a sweet mouth to be desired above the wealth of empires . . . you write a novel to prove these things are nothing . . . you . . . Monsieur Boylesve, and receive as the prophet of a moment the homage of neurotics, the praise of fools.

You tell of Odette and Jean, but lately married, and of their love that filled their home with perfume of content; how in the first month of war he was killed, leaving her desolate, weeping and not to be consoled . . . you make of her a maudlin and spoiled child, pretty and selfish almost beyond belief. Then all about her husbands and lovers of her women friends die and overshadow in numbers her so poignant grief. She flies to Surville, where she had last summered with Jean, to escape the shame with which their calm and selfless resignation accentuates the fury of her own despair. And even there telegrams and letters telling of heroic self-sacrifice and death—the deaths of others equally brave and desirable with her Jean—come to disturb her retreat, to make futile her unappeasable anguish. Gradually, because she cannot endure her thoughts, she is drawn into hospital work.

But you are not fair to her. She moves in beauty though the night be doubly black with clouds of thunder. Surely it is something in a world of horror to incarnate the mystery and beauty of happier times, to appear before men whose eyes are wide with peering upon brutalities unspeakable, whose hands are red with blood, and appeal only to their dreams of home, to rouse their love of domesticity and peace. But she is nothing to you. Her loosened hair but tangled vanity, her white and rose skin of no concern, her loveliness—to prove your sick philosophy, you marry her (though not in love) to a blind officer. . . . Yourself? Do you not know that we do war against ugliness in the form of Prussian barbarism?

And the individual? What purpose do medals and honorable mention serve if not to reassert the worth of the individual who by unaided gallantry and self-assurance lifts himself above the smoke of battle, standing out lone and splendid among his fellows? One man may turn the tide of battle or lift a regiment against odds over the top to victory, one woman trail in the light of her beauty more comfort than a dozen orderlies.

You no longer count! Monsieur Boylesve, you count to such an extent that you could, with your parable, damp the ardor of the happiest singer. Every letter we write, every word we speak, every tear we shed is heavy with its effect upon another . . . now more than ever.

YOU NO LONGER COUNT. BY RENE BOYLESVE. Charles Scribner's Sons.

WELL, the Brevoort seems lonesome now that Joseph Hergesheimer has headed back to Dover House, West Chester, Pa. His *Java Head*, if the wind keeps fair, will be published January 15; meanwhile Mr. Heinemann will introduce England to Hergesheimer by bringing out *Java Head*, *Gold and Iron* and *The Three Black Pennys*. We hope the English critics who despair of American fiction will read 'em all; they may then still despair but it will be in another direction. Three copies of *Java Head* were sent at intervals to Mr. Heinemann and all three were sunk, so finally he took it anyway, sight unseen. John Galsworthy, one of his authors, went around and told him that Hergesheimer could write. The scene of the new novel is Salem town. The local color cost Hergesheimer upward of \$800—well spent, we fancy.

Of signal importance is the news that the early part of 1919 will see the publication by Doubleday, Page & Company of a new novel, probably of 300 to 400 pages, by Joseph Conrad. It will be called *The Arrow of Gold* and is a marvellous love story. The setting is France and the period near half a century ago when the Legitimists wanted to set up the Count of Chambord as a Bourbon king.

The October *Bookman* contains a bit of prose writing by Joyce Kilmer, *Hely Ireland*, a sketch of a lodging for the night enjoyed by a little group of Irish American soldiers at a farmhouse in France. Richard Le Gallienne writes about Kilmer. Arnold Bennett, who is now engaged in the task of inducing people to read something else besides fiction—a task which his own fiction is making lighter—advises the reading of geography; as if the war had not made geography as necessary as clothes. Robert Cortes Holliday, the author whose trochaic name rings in the head as the Last Line of some memorable "unwritten poem, has a paper, *On Carrying a Case*. This is to be the first essay in his new book, *Walking-Stick Papers*. But canes are not carried, they are worn.

Roland G. Usher's practice of writing in a cemetery at Annisquam, Mass., is commendable and we hope for a collection of epitaphs that will transcend *Spoon River Anthology*. Or a poem, possibly, to compete with Gray's *Elegy*.

There is a tiny new book store in New York—probably the most extraordinary in existence. It is run by Joel Rinaldo, who has for twenty years had a restaurant on Forty-first street near Seventh avenue known as "Joel's," made famous by such dishes as chile con carne and hot tamales.

The new "store" is called "Joel's Show Case." It is on the dance floor, opposite the "jazz" band stand. Here in this show case, between the Fatimas and the Mannel Garcias, Mr. Rinaldo, who has had a bent toward the Muses all his life, has stacked his stock. And what a stock of books for a place where whirls the light fantastic and the clang of the cymbal is heard!

There is Mr. Rinaldo's own book, *The Polygeneric Theory*, being a most extraordinary and bizarre attempt on the part of a restaurateur to upset the Darwinian theory of the evolution of species. This book is in its third edition.

There is also Carlo de Fornaro's *Island*

of *Purgatory*, which is the tale of the author's one year passed on Blackwell's Island for criminal libel on Porfirio Diaz, the late tyrant of Mexico. This book is the most powerful piece of prison literature that has appeared in the world since the Dantesque horrors of Dostoevsky.

The third book is *The Shadow Eater*, by Benjamin De Casseres. A book of nihilistic free verse, which Mr. Rinaldo says will outlive food itself.

The latest yarn is that Ambrose Bierce was last seen alive on the ship that bore Lord Kitchener to his death, the presumption (it would be virtually a certainty) being that he was drowned when the vessel went down.

TO THE EDITOR OF BOOKS AND THE BOOK WORLD—Sir: We beg to inform you that the prize novel contest which we instituted some months ago came to a close September 15, as provided by the terms of the contest.

One thousand six hundred and fifty-one manuscripts were submitted in all, coming from England, Scotland, Canada, Switzerland, the West Indies and the United States.

Eleven editors worked on the contest.

To *Embers*, a novel by Jeffrey Deپرد, and a first book, has been awarded the prize, our certified check for \$10,000 on the Harris Trust and Savings Bank of Chicago. The plot of the story is laid in Canada and Belgium. It is not a war story.

We are confident that we have made a great discovery in the author of the prize novel, and we do not hesitate to predict that *Embers* will quickly rank Mr. Deپرد among the foremost realists.

He has travelled extensively in all parts of the world and brings the color and atmosphere of the countries in which the story is laid faithfully to his canvas. Mr. Deپرد is a member of the Indianapolis bar, and when at home lives on a farm at Columbus, Ind.

We are exerting ourselves to publish the prize novel at the earliest possible date.

J. W. WALLACE & COMPANY.
160 NORTH WELLS STREET, CHICAGO.

George Bernard Shaw to a friend:
"10 ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON,
"5th March, 1918.

"O. Henry has been a godsend to me. A few weeks ago I got poisoned by the phosphorus in a compound supposed to be synthetic egg, of which a lady gave me an overdose. In the subsequent intoxication and colic and horror I fell down a steep flight of stairs on my head, and had to lie up for some days in consequence. That was where O. Henry came in. He would be a miracle if he were not standing on the shoulders of Kipling and Cunningham-Graham, whom he has assimilated so wonderfully that he may be regarded as the summit of that kind of story telling. He has an immense receptivity and range of observation, producing the impression of unlimitedness which marks the first class in these matters."

"10 ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON,
"7th May, 1918.

"Since I wrote you about O. Henry I have been trying to find out why what I said about him was so unsatisfying, and I am rather pleased to see that it did not quite satisfy you either. I think the omission was a very simple one; I said nothing about his charm. It is not enough to say that he has all the qualities; that he has this quality of Kipling's and that quality of Cunningham-Graham's and the other quality of De Maupassant, or even that he can play riotously with them all. The combination is not additional but chemical; it produces something to which the others are merely ingredient. I can only call it charm, meaning the particular attraction that the others have not got, though their state may be the more gracious. I cannot name my favorite story. No violent preference has yet arisen. Besides, I haven't yet read them all."

A young woman librarian was visiting the cots in one of the army base hospitals and offered one soldier a copy of Marjorie Benton Cooke's irresistible *Bambi*.

"What's it about?" asked the patient.

"Oh, it's about a girl who married a man without his having anything to say about it."

"Hold on, there!" shouted a fellow a little way off who had just declined any

book at all. He raised himself on his elbow and reached out his hand.

"Give me that book. It's my autobiography."

Fascinated, we hang upon the stray particulars about Amy Lowell's forthcoming book of "polyphonic prose," *Can Grande's Castle*. The contents are now disclosed to be as follows: *Sea Blue and Blood Red*, based on the story of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton; *Guns as Keys: And the Great Gate Swings*, dealing with Perry's visit to Japan; this has already appeared in a periodical and in Mr. Braithwaite's anthology of magazine verse for 1917 and its quality is known; *Hedge Island*, "a retrospect and a prophecy" of the old world dissolving into a new, and *The Bronze Horses*, having for its subject the great equestrian group that decked a triumphal arch in Rome, that was removed to Constantinople by Constantine, that was seized by the Venetians in the Fourth Crusade and placed over the portico of the Basilica of St. Mark, that was taken to Paris by Napoleon, that was returned to Venice in 1814 and that has remained in Venice until recently when the Austrian incursion made it necessary to send the group for safety to—Rome. Home after 2,000 years.

Willis J. Abbot has written a history of the Marine Corps which, under the title *Soldiers of the Sea: The Story of the United States Marine Corps*, Dodd, Mead & Co. will publish immediately. Mr. Abbot includes the fighting at Chateau Thierry.

A stagnack, according to Horace B. Liveright, is a person who thinks that Gorky is a brand of caviar (but isn't he?); Balzac the name of a mining stock (we have some); John Macy the proprietor of a department store (nonsense, he deals in notions exclusively); and Ellen Key the author of *The Star Spangled Banner*. Who will organize a stagnack party?

The success of Private Charles Divine's book of verse, *City Ways and Company Streets*, leads Moffat, Yard & Co. to promise for late winter publication another volume of Divine's poems, written in France, together with a number of his letters.

Peter B. Kyne

This is a story of the giant Redwoods of California, inspiring big men to big deeds.

The struggles of the pioneer John Cardigan and his son, Bryce, against the treachery of a Michigan lumber magnate and how they outwit them by the help of a loyal and brave girl, are told with swift and vivid strokes.

The Valley of the Giants

Net, \$1.40

Harriet T. Comstock

Self-sacrifice is the spirit of this moving story. The happiness that comes to those who give is the lot of Mam'selle Jo, who wins her way by hard and bitter experience through a slough of debts to financial independence and a happiness unknown to her.

The book fits the spirit of the times.

Net, \$1.40 *Mam'selle Jo*

Peter Clarke Macfarlane

A story combining the strong fictional appeal of his novel "Held to Answer" and the political knowledge gained through years of investigation of civic and national affairs.

A novel of love and politics in a big American city, and at the same time a drama of universal human interest.

The Crack in the Bell

Net, \$1.40

THE RULE OF MIGHT

By J. A. CRAMB

(J. A. Revermott)

A story of Vienna in 1809 and of three days in Napoleon's life there.

The distinguished author of "Germany and England" has drawn a remarkably life-like portrait of the man, and has written a dramatic novel of the times when peace and war trembled in the balance and on the conqueror's destiny depended the fate of Europe.

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